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MEMORANDUM Jnt Cir March 12, 1964

TO: Jenner-Liebeler

FROM: Coleman-Slawson

SUBJECT: Taking of Testimony of Ruth Paine

As you know, Ruth Paine stayed with the Oswald's in New Orleans a few days before she and Marina drove in Ruth Paine's station wagon to Irving, Texas. Lee Oswald was left in New Orleans and we now know that he very soon thereafter went to Mexico. We have testimony to the effect that Marina, being quite pregnant at this time, did not take an active part in packing the station wagon, but that Ruth Paine and Lee Oswald did most of the work. In fact, probably Ruth Paine herself did most of the work.

Our testimony is fairly solid that when Lee Oswald was in Mexico he had only one suitcase and that was a small zipper bag. This small zipper bag is now in the possession of the Commission or the FBI and was identified by Marina as belonging to Lee during her testimony before the Commission. However, we also have fairly firm testimony that when Lee Oswald left New Orleans on his way to Mexico he had two suitcases; there is also some slight indication that the suitcases were "rectangular." The shape and size of the suitcases have not been pinned down too well, however, it may be that only one of the suitcases was rectangular. Anyway, neither of the two witnesses to the fact that Lee Oswald left New Orleans with two suitcases has ever mentioned the fact that one of them was a zipper bag.

The disappearance of the second suitcase is one of those small facts which may just possibly loom large in explaining what happened on the trip to Mexico and whether that trip had any connection with the assassination. We would like to see Ruth Paine questioned as closely as possible on whether Lee Oswald was left with two suitcases or only one, and whether the suitcases were rectangular, whether one or more of them was a zipper bag, there approximate size, shape, etc.

We feel that especially great precaution should be taken in questioning Mrs. Paine on this point not to lead her inadvertently into thinking she remembers which she does not.

MAILROOM

It is possible that further investigation will break down the "two-suitcase" evidence or, on the other hand, it might break down the "one-zipper bag" evidence. If either of these were to happen, it would be unfortunate if we were left with an inconsistent statement by Ruth Paine which really did not reflect her actual memory.

So far as we know Ruth Paine has never been questioned on this point before.